

FERN GULLY

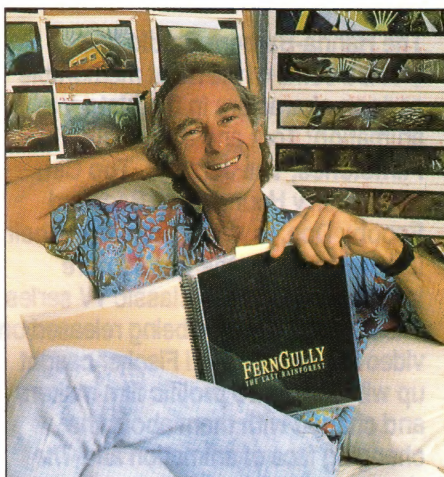
AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

In this age of competitive animation, it's good to see a couple of Aussies cracking the big time. *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* - is shaping up to be the most ambitious feature-length cartoon made outside of Disney, and is the brainchild of two Australian film makers: *Crocodile Dundee*'s Peter Faiman and Wayne Young. In this exclusive sneak preview, Paul Fischer discusses what is shaping up to be a cartoon blockbuster ready to take the big guns by the throat.

When Australian author Diana Young wrote an anthology of children's stories set deep within the rainforests of her country, little did she know that a film was lurking around the corner. When she accepted an offer to secure the film rights, she knew that the only way to make it work was if it were animated. Enter Peter Faiman and Wayne Young, director and associate producer respectively of the first *Crocodile Dundee*. They were so passionate about this project that they set out to raise the \$20 million necessary to make it viable, and with considerable help from FAI Insurance, the money was raised and the wheels were set in motion.

Animator and Oscar nominee Bill Kroyer was signed on to direct, and Twentieth Century Fox agreed to distribute. What could be the world's first environmentally-slanted cartoon feature went into production in an old disused Los Angeles warehouse; *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* was born, and according to producer Wayne Young, back in Sydney for a fleeting visit, it's going to be one of the most exciting pieces of movie animation audiences are likely to see.

The film is based on two children's books written by Diana Young in the late seventies. It is set in FernGully, the deepest and most beautiful area within the lush, green rainforest. Audiences view *FernGully* from the perspective of its unique inhabitants: Crysta, the beautiful, curious and mischievous teenage fairy; Pips, her rebellious and protective elfin childhood sweetheart, and Magi Lune, the sage mentor of all the nature spirits. When Crysta's curiosity gets the better of her, she ventures out of the protective canopy of the deep forest to learn about the world beyond. Much to her delight, she stumbles upon Zak, a human teenage boy who is part of a logging



but realistic drawing in *FernGully*.

Young is convinced that the project will further the growth of animation in a big way. Featuring big-name actors like Christian Slater and Robin Williams as well as newcomers who provide the voice characterizations, *FernGully* is one of the most anticipated films of next year, and it's great to see a couple of Aussies leaving their indelible mark in one of the most competitive of industries.

Paul Fischer

FernGully: The Last Rainforest, is being released theatrically by Hoyts-Fox Columbia-Tri Star in April 1992.

Left: Co-Producer Wayne Young

team. When her magic goes a bit awry, Crysta unintentionally shrinks Zak down to fairy size. It is when she then takes him back to FernGully that the extraordinary adventure begins. While Young admits that the film contains a strong environmental message, he also points out it's not just a sledge-hammering message picture. "It's first and foremost a piece of entertainment." He insisted on going for broke, utilising American resources, and spending over \$20 million on this ambitious project. "If you want to compete with Disney, which is precisely what we're doing, then you have to spend a lot of money." He and his team of animators spent time in the plush rainforests around Byron Bay, soaking up the atmosphere which translates to some rich

